Healing is Possible Through Resting

By Thich Nhat Hanh

Good morning, my dear friends.
Welcome to the third week of our summer opening. Today is the thirtieth of July 1997, and we are in the Upper Hamlet. We have been practicing pebble meditation during the past two weeks, and I hope that the children who just arrived yesterday and today will continue with our practice of the six pebbles. There are children who have been here for the last two weeks, and they will show you how to practice pebble meditation. You'll have to make a small bag like this, and find six pebbles like this, little pebbles. Wash them very carefully, dry them, and put them into the bag.

Today we will learn a short poem together, young people and also less young people. We are going to use the pebbles to practice the poem also. It would be wonderful if you can memorize the short poem in order to practice. Many of you know it by heart already, but there may be a few of you who have not been introduced to the practice of this poem: "In, out. Deep, slow. Calm, ease. Smile, release. Present moment, wonderful moment." I guess most of us can sing it already. Shall we sing?

In, out.
Deep, slow.
Calm, ease.
Smile, release.
Present moment,
Wonderful moment.

This is a wonderful poem, because every time you practice it you'll feel much better within your body and your mind. When you are angry, when you are worried, when you suffer, if you know how to practice that poem then you will feel much better right away after one or two minutes.

I am going to remind you of the way to practice. First, "in" and "out." It means that when I breathe in, I know I am breathing in. It's easy. And when I breathe out, I know I am breathing out. I don't mix the two things up. Breathing in, I know it is my in-breath. Breathing out, I know this is my out-breath. By that time, you stop all the thinking, you just pay attention to your in-breath and your out-breath. You are 100 percent with your in-breath and your out-breath.

It is like holding a baby in such a way that you hold it with 100 percent of yourself. Suppose this is a baby and I hold the baby like this. I hold the baby with 100 percent of myself. Remember, there are times when your mother holds you like this. Have you seen the image of the Virgin Mary holding the baby Jesus? She holds him like that: 100 percent. So here, our in-breath is our baby, and we hold our in-breath 100 percent. "Breathing in, I know that I am breathing in." You just embrace your in-breath, nothing else. Don't think of anything else. That is the secret of success.

When you breathe in, you just breathe in, you do nothing else. Do you think you can do that? I am asking the adults also, do you think you can do that? Just embrace your in-breath with 100 percent of yourself—mind and body together. And when you breathe out, you embrace your out-breath. You identify your in-breath as your in-breath, because when I hold my baby I know this is my baby, not something else. So, "in, out" means, "breathing in I know this is my in-breath, breathing out, I know this is my out-breath." It's very simple, but it's wonderful. I am sure that if you try it, after two or three in-breaths and out-breaths you will feel much better already. I can guarantee it because I have done it and I always feel wonderful.

If you are about to cry, if you are about to kick or hit someone else because of your anger, and if you know how to go back to yourself and practice "in, out" for three times, I am sure that you'll be different. You will not cry, you will not kick, you will not punch because you are a much better person after the practice of "in, out." Today, try and you'll see the power of the practice.

Then after you have practiced "In, out" three, four, or five times, you'll feel that your in-breath has become deeper and your out-breath becomes slower. Because when you are angry, when you are in despair, when you suffer, your in-breath and out-breath are very short and not calm at all. But then after having breathed in and out peacefully, your in-breath will be very smooth. Your out-breath, also. So the quality of your breathing has been improved. Your in-breath is deeper and calmer, your out-breath is also deeper and calmer. That is why we can practice "deep and slow."

Breathing in, I know that my in-breath has become deeper, and the deeper it is, the more pleasant it becomes. Try to practice breathing in for a few times and you'll see that it is deeper. And when it is deeper, you'll feel a lot of pleasure. When you breath out, you say, "Breathing out, I know my out-breath has become slower, slower, more peaceful." If your breath is deeper, you are deeper. If your breath is slower, you are slower. It means you are more peaceful. So, breathing in, I know that my breath has become deeper. Breathing out, I know that my breathing has become slower. It's wonderful.

You might use your pebbles also. If you are practicing sitting meditation, you put the pebbles on your left, you bow to the pebbles, and you pick up a pebble with two fingers. One pebble. You look at it and you put it in the palm of your left hand and you begin to practice breathing in, breathing out. "In, out." The practice is smooth. "In, out." Once more. "In, out." You'll feel much better. Then, I use my two fingers to take the pebble up and I put it on my right side. I have practiced "In, out" already.

Now, I'd like to practice, "Deep, slow." So, I take another pebble. I look at it. I put it in my left hand and I begin to practice. "Deep, slow." It has become deeper by itself, you don't have to make it deeper. It has become deeper by itself alone because you have practiced already three times "In, out." That is why your breath becomes deeper naturally, and slower. Let us practice together "Deep, slow" three times. "Deep, slow" [pause for three breaths]. Good, we have finished with "Deep, slow. We pick up the pebble and put it on our right side.

Now we practice the third line, "Calm, ease." It means, "Breathing in, I feel calm. Breathing out, I feel I take everything at ease." This exercise is very wonderful to practice, especially when you are nervous, when you are angry, when you don't feel peaceful in yourself. Quick, quick! You have to go back to your in-breath and out-breath and practice "Calm, ease."

This is an exercise given by the Buddha himself in a sutra called *Anapanasati Sutra, The Sutra on Mindful Breathing*. "Breathing in, I calm the mental formations in me. Breathing out, I let go." I let go of my anger. I calm my anger, I calm my worries, I calm my jealousy. And I let go of my anger, I let go of my jealousy. I think that adults have to practice together with the children. Every time the child is angry then her mother or her father should take her hand and invite her to practice. "Calm, ease." "Let us, together, practice calming and easing. 'Breathing in, I calm myself. Breathing out, I let go'" at least three times and you will feel much better.

You can begin right away with "Calm, ease" or you might begin in a classical way with "In, out" first and then "Deep, slow" and then "Calm, ease." Either way is good. The Buddha dharma is wonderful. The moment you take the dharma up and practice you begin to feel better right away. And as you continue the practice, your quality of being always continues to improve.

I propose to you to practice three times 'Calm, ease' but no one prevents you from practicing more than that: four times, five times, six times, if you like it. I think you will like it because it makes you suffer less. And if you can practice eight times, ten times, you'll feel much better. "Calm, ease."

Then you'll come to the fourth pebble, and that is "Smile, release. Smile, release." "Breathing in, I smile." You can smile now. You may feel it is very difficult to smile, too difficult to smile. But after having practiced three or four times you feel that you are able to smile. And if you can smile, you'll feel a lot better. You may protest, "Thay, I have no joy in me, why do you want me to smile? That's not natural." Many people ask me like that, not only children, but grownup people. They protest, "Thay, I have no joy in me. I cannot force myself to smile, it would not be true, it would not be natural."

I always say that a smile can be a practice, a kind of yoga practice. Yoga of the mouth: you just smile even if you don't feel joy and you'll see after you smile that you'll feel differently. Sometimes the mind takes the initiative and sometimes you have to allow the body to take the initiative.

Sometimes the spirit leads, and sometimes the body can lead. This is why when you have joy, you naturally smile. But sometimes you can allow the smile to go first. You try to smile and suddenly you feel that you don't suffer that much any more. So don't discriminate against the body. The body also can be a leader, not only the spirit. I propose that you try this when you wake up during the night. It's totally dark. Breath in and smile, and you'll see. Smile to life. You are alive, you smile. This is not a diplomatic smile, because no one sees you smiling. Yet the smile is a smile of enlightenment, of joy—the joy you feel of being alive.

So smiling is a practice, a yoga practice. Don't say, "I have no joy, why do I have to smile?" Because when you have joy and you smile, that is not practice, that's very natural. When you don't have joy and you smile, that is a real practice. You know there are something like 300 muscles, small and big on your face. Every time we get very angry or worried all these muscles are very tight. When people look at you with that tension on your face, they don't see you like a flower. People are afraid of you when all the muscles on your face are tense like that. You look more like a bomb than a flower. But if you know how to smile, in just

one second, all these muscles are relaxed and your face looks like a flower again. It's wonderful.

So we have to learn to smile and then we'll look presentable right away. Look into the mirror and practice, and you'll see that the practice of the smile is very important. It brings relaxation and you can let go. You feel that you are released from the grip of the anger, of the despair.

[Bell]

On my right, there are already four pebbles. Now I'd like to practice the fifth pebble. This is the most wonderful practice. The fifth pebble can bring you a lot of joy, a lot of enlightenment, a lot of delight. That is "Present moment, wonderful moment. Present moment, wonderful moment."

This is a very deep teaching of the Buddha. The Buddha said that it is possible to live happily right here and right now. We don't have to go to the future. We don't have to go elsewhere to be happy. We can be happy right here and right now. You don't need more conditions to be happy, you have enough conditions to be happy right here and right now. If we know how to be ourselves and to look inside and around ourselves, we see that we have had enough conditions to be happy. That is the practice of living happily in the present moment.

When you breathe in, you feel that you are alive. Life is available to you, now: the blue sky, the white cloud, the green vegetation, the birds singing. Plum Village is here. Many friends are here. Your daddy is still alive, your mommy is with you, your brother is there, your sister is there. You have strong feet. You can run. You have eyes that can help you to see everything. There are many conditions for your happiness, you don't need anything else, you can be happy right away. You stop running. That is the practice. Because there are people who run all of their lives; they run because they think that happiness is not possible in the here and the now.

So this is a wonderful teaching of the Buddha. You breath in and you say "Present moment." It means, "I establish myself in the present moment. I don't run any more." This is the practice of *samata*, stopping. Stop running. I am wonderful like this in my sitting position or my walking position or even in my lying down position. It's wonderful like that I don't need to run any more. Stopping. Present moment, wonderful moment. It's wonderful that you are alive.

To be alive, that is a miracle. Imagine a person who is already dead. You might not have seen a dead person but maybe you have seen a dead bird, a dead

animal. No matter what you do, the animal cannot come back to life. Whatever you do, whatever you say, the animal is not able to listen, to hear. A dead person is also like that. She lies on the bed and no matter what you do, you cannot revive her. You cannot bring her into life again. You cry, you beat your chest, you pull your hair. But that person is already dead.

So, when you look at yourself, you see you are still alive. You see the person you love is still alive. That is wonderful. You have to wake up to that fact. The teaching of the Buddha is the teaching of waking up, waking up to see that all these wonderful things are still available. So you stop running, you establish yourself in the present moment. "Breathing in, I am in the here and in the now. Present moment. Breathing out, I feel this is a wonderful, wonderful moment."

The Buddha said life is available only in the present moment. The past is gone, the future is not yet here, you have only one moment to be alive. That is the present moment. So simple and so deep. You have an appointment with life. You should not miss that appointment. Life is most precious. You've got to meet her, you've got to be with her. And you know something, life is only available in the here and the now, in the present moment. So don't miss your appointment with life. Don't miss the present moment. That is why the fifth practice is wonderful. If you practice like that, you get a lot of joy whether you are on your cushion or on your bed or in the position of walking meditation. "Present moment, wonderful moment."

Now I would like to ask you to sing and I will practice. I practice for you. I will practice breathing in and out and I enjoy for you. Okay.

[The community sings: "In, out. Deep, slow. Calm, ease. Smile, release. Present moment, wonderful moment."]

I think by now, everyone knows the gatha by heart. I would like to tell you that this gatha is also good for practicing walking meditation. We shall do walking meditation after the talk and you may like to walk peacefully and happily with this poem. You breathe in and you make two steps. You say, 'In, in." Then you breath out and you make another two steps, "Out, out." That is walking meditation. You don't do anything else. Your mind and your body are totally for the breathing in, the breathing out, and the making of steps. You are perfectly concentrated in walking and breathing, you are not concerned with other things. And you can continue with "In, out" like that for a few minutes. If you want to walk a little bit quicker, you can make three steps while breathing in and breathing out.

You do it very naturally, in such a way that you get a lot of pleasure. Don't be so serious, so solemn. You do it very, very, very naturally. "In, in, out, out." If you enjoy walking, you feel wonderful. You are doing the practice correctly. After some time, you switch into 'Deep, slow." "Deep, deep, slow, slow. Deep, deep, slow, slow." Very concentrated. And we shall be walking with you. Everyone is concentrated. Everyone is peaceful. Everyone is joyful. The energy of joy and of peace will radiate from each person, and if we walk in the Sangha like that, we will receive the collective energy and it will be very, very strong.

There is still one pebble left. But for this gatha we don't need all six pebbles, we need only five. After you have practiced five gathas, your sitting meditation is done. So you hear the sound of the bell, you collect your pebble, and you put it in your small bag.

Do you think my small bag is beautiful? I like this color very much. If you want to have your bag in yellow or orange, you are welcome. Make a very beautiful pebble bag for your meditation because you are going to practice using it here. And when you go home you'll continue to use your pebble meditation bag. If the adults want to imitate, they are welcome. It's wonderful. There are those of us who have rosaries—108—and the use of the rosary is exactly like the use of the pebbles. But I think this way is fun.

So, please, young people, I think today you have a lot of things to do. Do them joyfully. I hope the children who have been here for one or two weeks will transmit the teaching of the pebble meditation to the newer children and then we will practice together. Now, when you hear the bell, please stand up and bow to the Sangha before you go out and continue the practice.

[Bell]

I would like to give a little bit more instruction about [conscious breathing]. Don't try to breathe in. Don't make any effort of breathing in. It is very important. Allow yourself to breathe in naturally. You breathe in any way, why do you have to make a determination to breathe in? That is the point. Allow yourself to breathe in normally. Only pay attention to your in-breath. Don't say, "My in-breath, come here, I will tell you how to do it." No. You allow yourself to breathe in, that's all. Short or long, you allow it to be the way it is. Be completely non-violent while holding your baby. Don't force your baby to be like this or to be like that, allow it to be as it is. Embrace it only with your mindfulness. It is very important.

When you love someone, you allow him to be or allow her to be. Don't say, "If you don't do this, I will not love you." This is already the practice of love. Allow your in-breath to be itself. Just embrace it with the energy of mindfulness. "Breathing in, I am aware that I am breathing in." That's all. The impact will be great.

Many people practice like they are in a hard labor camp. You force yourself, you make too much effort, and you tire yourself out after some time. If you know how to allow yourself to rest, to allow your in-breath and your out-breath to flow in and out naturally, you will never get tired. You only need to light up your mindfulness and to be aware of it. Like when you turn on the light, you just turn on the light. And because of the light you are aware that the bell is there, your friend is there. Awareness is like that. So you recognize your in-breath as an in-breath, your out-breath as your out-breath, and you embrace them with love.

Then in no time at all, their quality of being will be improved. Like a suffering baby who is kicking, is crying, is vibrating. You don't say, "Now, stop, don't cry, don't be agitated!" You don't say this. You don't do anything; you don't intervene. You don't force it to be the way you want. Just pick up the baby and embrace it with all your being. When you have the energy of tenderness, of love and of care, that energy will naturally penetrate into the baby and there will be a transformation. Many of you have been a mother or a father and you know this. Just hold the baby with your tenderness, with your whole presence. And that whole presence, body and mind concentrated we call mindfulness (and you are capable of being mindful, you know). So you cultivate your mindfulness so that you will be mindful more, to be there for your suffering, for yourself, for your beloved one.

In sitting meditation you do like that also. Don't struggle in order to sit. Allow yourself to sit in a relaxed way. "Smile, release." Remember, there was a time when you'd sit in your living room watching television? You could sit for one hour, even two hours? And you didn't complain that you had pain in your shoulders or arms. You just allow yourself to sit. Sitting meditation is not a struggle. If you take it to be a struggle, you'll be tired. After fifteen minutes you'll feel pain in your shoulders and in your head. So, allow yourself to rest. When you practice sitting meditation, walking meditation, allow yourself to rest. It is possible to rest while practicing walking meditation, sitting meditation, mindful breathing. In fact, this practice I offer to you as a means of resting.

Many of us take vacations. But during the time of the vacation we don't know how to rest. Then after the vacation, we are more tired. So, we now allow

ourselves to rest our body and our spirit. Here, we are learning the art of resting. Meditation as the practice of resting.

Our body has the capacity of healing itself. You know that. When you get a cut in your finger, do you have to do anything? No. You only have to keep it clean and in a few days it will be healed. Your body has a number of problems within because you have not allowed it to rest. If you know the art of total relaxation, the art of allowing your body to rest, most of these troubles will go away after a few weeks.

When an animal is wounded in the woods, it knows how to do this. It seeks a peaceful corner in the forest and it lays down for several days. Several generations of ancestors have transmitted to them the wisdom that this is the only way to restore themselves. They don't have doctors, they don't have pharmacists, but they know how to rest. They don't need to run after their prey, they don't need to eat—in fact, they fast during these three, four, five days of resting. And one day the animal is healed and it stands up and it goes to look for a source of food.

We don't know how to do like animals. In order to get well quickly we bring a lot of interventions into our body: we take a lot of drugs; we undergo a lot of treatments. But we don't know how to allow our body to rest. So learning how to allow your body to rest is a very important practice. Love your body. You learn total relaxation and you can do it several times a day. Five minutes is enough, ten minutes. Even three minutes are already very good if you know how to allow your body to rest completely.

And for your spirit, it is the same. Our consciousness is able to heal itself. It has the power of self healing but you don't allow it to rest. You continue to feed your consciousness with your anger, your worries, your thinking, and so on. You don't believe in your consciousness. You are seeking for a means to heal it but you don't know how to allow yourself to rest. You keep thinking the whole day and you keep worrying the whole day. You never allow yourself to rest. If you know how to practice total relaxation, you'll know how to smile and how to send your smile to different parts of your body. During that time, you have stopped thinking and worrying because you are focused on your body, your breathing, your walking. When you practice mindful breathing, when you practice "In, out, deep, slow," not only can you nourish yourself—body and spirit—but you can also stop your thinking. Stopping the thinking, stopping the worries, is very important.

Our mind is like a cassette tape turning nonstop day and night. We have a habit. You are not there, because you are carried away by your thinking, by your worries. You may get lost in the past, regretting the past or being caught in the suffering that you endured during the past. You suffered in the past already but now you want to suffer more by recalling the past. You call your past back in order for you to suffer more. Why do you have to show it several times, your suffering? Cows, when they eat grass, they swallow and then they bring it up again and swallow for a second time. Many of us do the same. We have suffered already in the past. But we want to bring our suffering back to the present moment and suffer more. We like that.

The future is not yet there but we think of it and we worry, and we become scared. We are not capable of dwelling in the present moment where life is. Life and its many wonders are available inside of you and around you and yet you are not able to touch its wonders because you get lost in the past, in the future, and also in your projects, your worries. How can your mind rest and restore itself? Our mind also has the capacity of self healing just as our body.

Remember when you lost someone very dear, you suffered, and you thought that you'd never restore yourself, you'd never be able to forget that suffering. You thought that the suffering would dwell with you, the wound would be with you, forever. But some time later you got used to it and you were able to go on with life. This means that your mind, your spirit, was able to heal itself.

We have to trust our spirit in the way we trust our body. Our spirit has the power of self healing if only we know how to allow it to rest and don't continue to feed it with more worries, with more projects, with more fear. The practice of mindful breathing, mindful walking, enjoying the contemplation of the sky, of the vegetation, of being with friends, enjoying things in the present moment, helps you to stop these kinds of feelings—the heart and the spirit filling with worries and fear. You will heal in the inside.

During the time you are here in Plum Village, you are surrounded by many friends who are practicing resting, recuperating themselves. Do a lot of total relaxation, mindful relaxing, walking, and sitting meditation, and enjoying doing things mindfully to help the Sangha.

[Bell]

Many of us have had the good fortune of having a loving father, a loving mother, a loving teacher, or a loving brother or sister or friend. We have to call on them

for help. Whether they are still alive or they have passed away, they are always there in you.

A father always wants to love his child. That is the deepest nature of a father. If you see that your father does not love you, it is because he was not able to manifest his love, that's all. No one had helped him to express his love. All fathers, deep inside, want to love their child. But if they say, "I hate you! I don't recognize you as my child!" that is because they do not know how to do it. It does not mean that a father does not love his child. You also, you love your children even if your children do things you consider to be negative, that irritate you. Still, deep inside you, the love you have for your children is still intact. You only need to learn how to express your love. There are many people who think that their father or their mother doesn't love them, many are victims of such a vision. But, according to my experience, all fathers love their children, deeply. All mothers, also. Even animals, they love their children.

When you look into your hand—if you look deeply—you'll see that this hand of yours is also the hand of your mother and your father. Because you are a continuation of him, you are a continuation of her. This hand has been transmitted to you by your mother, by your father. It is also the hand of your ancestors. So, don't think that this is only your hand. This is the hand of several generations. And you are going to transmit this to your children and their children.

All your wisdom, all the wisdom, all the experience, all the suffering, all the happiness of all the generations of your ancestors are here in your hand. Our ancestors, their wisdom, their happiness, their sorrow, their hope, their fear are there inside you. They all have been transmitted to you. In every cell of your body you find everything: all the hope, all the fear, all the happiness, all the suffering of all the ancestors are in each cell of you. Now mankind is capable of cloning itself. We need only to take one cell, any cell of our body, and we can duplicate ourselves.

This means that in each cell there is the presence of you as a whole. The one is the all, that is the teaching of the Buddha in the Avatamsaka *Sutra*. And in each cell of our body there is hell, there is the Pure Land. There is the Buddha, there is Mara, there is Jesus, there is Satan, there is happiness, there is sorrow, in just one cell. All our ancestors can be touched, can be found in one cell, because one cell contains everything. And this is not just an abstract idea. You have heard of the technique of cloning. We know that one cell can manifest as the whole thing. So look in your own hand, and you'll see that the cells in your hand are also the cells of your father, your mother, your ancestors. Many of them were wise, were

happy. Call on these elements within yourself to come and help you and rescue you.

You have blood ancestors and you also have spiritual ancestors in yourself. If I only have blood ancestors, I cannot be myself, as I am now. Now I use my eyes in such a way that my ancestors did not. I have learned the Buddha's way of looking. I look at things with mindfulness. I look at things and touch the nature of inter-being in them. The way I look at the sky, at a pebble, as a person, is very deep. And without the Buddha, my teacher, I could not look like that. The way I breathe, the way I walk, also. My feet, walking, are also the feet of the Buddha. I am walking with the Buddha's feet. Not only do I walk with my mothers feet and my fathers feet, but also I walk with the feet of the Buddha, because each step I can generate joy and peace.

You have your beloved father in you. You have your beloved mother in you. You have your beloved teacher in you. Your teacher may be Jesus, your teacher may be Buddha, and, according to your practice, your teacher is more or less evident, powerful, in you.

Suppose you have a painful spot on your body. Why don't you call on your father, your mother, your ancestors, to come and help? Touch that painful spot with the energy of healing, of love. Because you know that deeply in him, your father loves you, deeply in her, your mother loves you, deeply in him, your teacher loves you and wants you well.

Suppose you have a tumor that might become important and the doctors say that the only way is to open you up and take it and throw it out. That is our tendency. If there is something that we don't want, we tend to cut it out and to throw it away: surgery. We have created the painful things in our body and we don't want them any more, we want to throw them out. It is the same with your mind, your consciousness. There are tumors in your consciousness, the tumor of hate, of despair, of depression. And we also want to cut and throw it out.

That is a way of life, a habit of thinking that we have learned from this new society. If you don't want anything, you eliminate it either by using a gun or a knife. We have to look deeply into our civilization and to see in what direction we are going. When we have something painful in us, we don't know how to take good care of it. We don't know how to embrace it the way we embrace our child. We want to take it, to throw it out. We want to punish it.

So, breathe in deeply, and see that this hand is the hand of your father, your loving father, or your loving mother or your loving teacher. Even if she is no

longer alive, she still is real in you because every cell in you is also her. Every cell in you is also him. Call on them to help. There are healthy cells in you, and the healthy cells will come to rescue the cells that are not so healthy. Because you do not know how to take care of them, some of them are tired and are being transformed into a problem.

So breathe in and bring your father, your mother, and your loving teacher back into your hand. You call the name of your father; the name of your teacher and suddenly your hand becomes the hand of your mother, your teacher. And then, when you breath out, touch the painful spot. Breathe slowly. Transmit all these energies to the painful spot. And after you finish, do it again. Breathe in, call his name, and you make him alive, you make her alive. The energy of your father or your teacher will be present in your hand. And when you breathe out you smile, and the energy of your father or your teacher will penetrate into you. Practice like this every day, whether in a sitting position or in a laying down position.

In the moment of your practice you are totally relaxed. You have faith in the people who love you, who want to wish you well. Then you make them present in the form of energy and you use that energy to touch and heal. Your hand has a healing power. You don't need someone else. Every one of us has a healing power within himself or herself, an energy you can generate into the palm of your hand. That energy is stored within each cell of your body. Learn to do it with your body. If you have a liver that does not work so well, that is suffering, concentrate yourself, inviting your father, your mother.

I have no doubt that my father always loved me. And I don't consider my father as nonexistent, because my father is in every cell in me. When I call on him, he is back in every cell in my body. When I generate that energy called the energy of a loving father, I touch myself and say, "Father, please help" And your father will be transmitting to you this energy. During that time you feel peaceful, knowing you are being loved, being taken care of by your father.

Remember when you were a small child, you had a fever and your tongue was so bitter you didn't want to eat anything? And your front felt like it was burning and when your mother came, she put her hand on your forehead, and suddenly you felt like you were in paradise. Just one hand. You felt much better with the presence of your mother and just one hand. Don't think that hand is no longer there. It is still there because your hand is the continuation of your mother's hand. And if you call on her, "Mommy? Please help," when you breath in and then, when you put your hand on your forehead and you breath out, you will receive exactly the same energy. Nothing is lost.

Take care of your body in such a way. Allow your body to rest in whatever position you are. And later you will be able to take care of your spirit, your ailing spirit, in the same way. You have blocks of pain, of sorrow, of fear, of despair within yourself. You have to embrace these blocks of pain and sorrow exactly in the same way. Call on them to help.

The Buddha-to-be is not something abstract. The Buddha is very deep in me because I have learned the practice. I have learned to look in the way the Buddha looked. I have learned to breathe the way the Buddha breathed. I have learned to walk in the way the Buddha walked. On the Gridhrakuta Mountain where the Buddha stayed more than twenty years, I sat there and I contemplated the very sunset that he had contemplated. I was looking with my eyes and his eyes at the beautiful sunset.

You also are capable of looking with your Buddha eyes. In your daily life you are used to looking with your eyes, the eyes that do not have the energy of mindfulness and concentration behind them. But with your mindful breathing, you can generate the Buddha eyes in you. When you use these eyes to look, you will see things much differently. It is like having a pair of binoculars and if you bring them up to your eyes, you can see differently. So, you have the Buddha eyes transmitted to you by your teacher. Why don't you use them? Just breathing in, breathing out, generates the energy of mindfulness and suddenly, you have the Buddha eyes. Looking with the Buddha eyes, you will not get angry. You will despair.

You should not have any complex. The Buddha is enough, Jesus is enough. Jesus said so, "I am in the father, the father is in me, I am in you, and you are in me." Very clear. You can't deny that teaching in the heart of Christianity.

So, if the Buddha is in you, why don't you call on him for help? You just breathe in and breathe out and Buddha will be alive, you can use Buddha eyes, Buddha hands. "Dear Buddha, please help," and suddenly you have the hand of the Buddha available to you. How simple. What else do you practice? What else do you learn? This is very simple, easy to understand, and yet very deep. The healing that you want, you can provide by yourself. You are supported by the Sangha, by the Dharma, by the Buddha, every moment of your daily life. If only you know this, you will realize that support is always available and then you will not feel alone and scared.

So today, in the Dharma discussion, please discuss this practice. Allow us to rest. Allow our body to rest. There are techniques of resting. You may not be used to them but they are good habits to learn. We have learned the other kind of habit

of not resting, and now we have to learn a positive habit to be able to rest—bodily and mentally. And we have to share with each other the ways we do this to arrive at a relaxed state of the body and of the mind.

Walking is a way of resting, sitting is a way of resting, eating is a way of resting. Don't struggle. We have struggled all our lives; we have gone nowhere at all. Stop the struggle and take care of our body, our mind. Practice resting and restoring ourselves and we'll go very far.

We will get together and discuss this. We will share our experience of the practice of resting. There are brothers and sisters who have been in the practice longer, they can share their practice. You may ask questions. And we practice the first day, the second day, and then we'll meet again and share again our practice. If you have any difficulties, if you have any questions, or if you have some success, some joy in your practice, please share these with other people.

We practice as a Sangha. There are dharma teachers available in our midst, there are also brothers and sisters who are familiar with the teaching and the practice. So do profit from their presence.

And when you feel concentrated and mindful, and you enjoy your practice of walking, of breathing, of smiling, then you'll contribute a lot to the Sangha. Because if we see you relaxed, walking mindfully, smiling, breathing mindfully, we will be reminded to do the same. Together, we'll produce that collective energy that will nourish us. When we go home, we can continue the practice even with our children. Because the children in Plum Village proved that they are capable of the practice.

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